1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

were more closely associated with it. All our best informants —Yat, Kar, Kis, Mar, Mes, Gwiyap, and Mey—spoke pidgin English, and all were of the Mangwiyow lineage with the exception of Mes. They also acted as interpreters when those who spoke only Kwoma were questioned. Gwiyap, Mar, Mey, and Mes were hired as house and shoot boys so that they were virtually always around. This permitted a great deal of unobtrusive questioning and observation of their behavior.

A short statement of the social positions in which the Kwoma placed the investigators may be useful in order to indicate the direction of the biases and lacunae in the data. At first we did not fit into any of the simple categories into which they had divided Europeans. A summary of the history of Kwoma contact with whites will clarify what being white meant to them. The first contact was in 1913 when the Kwoma killed a police boy[24] connected with the Behrmann expedition, for raping one of their women. A Kwoma was shot in reprisal. From this time until the Australians brought them "under control" in 1928, the Kwoma had little contact with Europeans. Since then they have come only occasionally in touch with white recruiters, traders, missionaries, and Australian government officers.

According to their own retrospective accounts, the first conception which the Kwoma had of the whites was that they were unnatural beings. They called them *ngamba* (ghost), a word which is also used to refer to a person who commits some heinous crime. It corresponds roughly in meaning to the English words "inhuman," "monstrous," or "unnatural"; and it would appear that this feeling persists, to some extent, to the present day. After I had been living at Rumbima for about six months, I came back from bathing at the spring below Mar's house without bothering to put my shoes on. Awa and Kwiya were sitting under Mar's porch. I had become quite friendly with these two girls, as I had frequently gossiped and joked with them on my almost daily

[24] Natives trained by both the former German and present Australian territorial governments to act as constables under the orders of a white officer.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

829 visits to Mar's house. They had never seen me without shoes
123 on, however, and when they saw my white feet they shud-
114 dered and turned away, indicating strong revulsion and horror. Mar told me afterward that the girls were sure that I was a ghost after they had seen my feet.

648 Another event that was important in determining the atti-
175 tude of the Kwoma toward Europeans took place in 1928. Two Australian police boys, while foraging for food at Hongwam, met and raped two Hongwam housewives. The husbands and relatives of these women attacked and killed the two police boys. When the Australian officer in charge of the district discovered the murders, he visited the tribe with a squadron of police boys, killed about twenty of the natives,[23] cut down their orchards, and burned their house tamberans. The natives who escaped fled into the bushes and swamps. The patrol officer built a house and stayed with his entourage until he had enticed the natives to return to their territory and had established order. During this time he tried to make clear to the natives that they had been punished for homicide and that, if they had grievances, they should bring their case to the "government" and not take the law into their own hands. He also let it be known that the Australian government was ready to punish anyone convicted of head-hunting or sorcery. Despite this warning, the Hongwam carried out a successful head-hunting raid a few years later. The patrol officer again visited the tribe; however, he could not discover the actual culprits, and so merely gave the assembled people of Kwoma a severe lecture threatening dire consequences similar to those of 1928 if there was any further evidence of head-hunting. He also forced a group of Kwoma, including Gwiyap, Mar, and Fit, to witness the hanging at Ambunti of some river natives who had been convicted of taking heads.

[121]

114 When we arrived at the government station at Ambunti on
648 our way to Kwoma, the patrol officer stationed there sent a police boy to Hongwam to order all the adult males to come to the station and carry our luggage over the mountain.

[23] Seventeen of those killed appear on the genealogical charts.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

him. As a result, none of my Kwoma friends would speak to me or bid me good-by.

In so far as we were included in the social structure of the Kwoma, we were known as *masta bilong Rumbima*. This meant that we belonged to the Rumbima hamlet of Hongwam subtribe, a natural consequence of the position of our house and the frequency of our contacts with Rumbima people. We were also placed in the kinship structure, being assigned to the Hayamakwo sib, Mangwiyow lineage, and Asanamp family line as younger brothers of Wof. Logically this should have made us *older brothers* to everyone else of the parent generation in the hamlet, but actually we were called *younger brother* by most of them. Those of the first descending generation called us *older* or *younger uncle*, except Mey, Gwiyap, and Mar who frequently called us *father*. The fact that we were not married, but were apparently older than any unmarried Kwoma should be, made our position in the maturation hierarchy somewhat anomalous. We were sometimes classed as adults and sometimes as adolescents. The latter tendency was accentuated by the fact that we did not know the culture but were learning it.

With this short account of the environment and of the various groups into which the Kwoma divide themselves, with this indication of our chief informants and brief description of our position in Kwoma society, the task of describing the habits which a Kwoma learns as he passes from stage to stage along his life cycle may now be undertaken. The framework presented in this chapter has but limited meaning for the infant, more for the child, and gains full significance only when adulthood is reached. The following chapters are an attempt to present the culture as it unfolds to the maturing individual at Kwoma.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

Finally they killed him, cut him up like a pig, and made soup of him. Only the adult males were allowed to eat the soup,[80] and it was believed that they were thus made such brave fighters that they were able to conquer their enemies.

The head-hunting raid provides the most frequently employed means of expressing aggression toward a foreigner. Such a raid is planned in advance, and allies are often recruited from friendly neighboring tribes. A careful itinerary is drawn up, and an unsuspecting and weak hamlet is chosen for attack. The men meet before setting out on the raid to eat a ceremonial soup. They travel under cover of darkness, arranging to arrive at their destination just before dawn. Then the men quietly surround an outlying dwelling and stand with spears poised while two of the boldest of the attackers creep toward the house. When they reach the entrance they let out a blood-curdling scream and kick the door down. The other attackers join in the shouting and in spearing the dazed occupants as they rush from the dwelling. When the attackers have killed the whole household, they rush to other houses in the hamlet, hoping to catch and kill some inhabitants who have not awakened at the outcry and fled. Then they return and behead the corpses with a bamboo knife. They carry the heads home. When they near their own tribe, they set up a victorious shout and dance into their hamlet, holding their trophies by the ear in their teeth. Then follows a victory dance which lasts for several days and nights.

A man is impelled to go on a head-hunting raid to gain prestige, as well as to avenge himself on a foreigner. No man is eligible to join *Nokwi*, the highest grade of the yam cult, until he has taken a head. Until he belongs to *Nokwi* he cannot plant yams, nor is he considered to be a man of importance in the community. It is the *Nokwi* members who have the greatest weight at the court sessions. Furthermore, a man

[80] This is the only occasion in the memory of informants that the Kwoma had practiced cannibalism. They showed disgust and contempt for those tribes who ate human flesh and betrayed some shame in reporting the above incident.

600 was well.

527 January 21, 1937. Gongs broke out with a "singsing" rhythm from Wenyabankura
224 today. Mar and Gwiyap both jumped up very excitedly and wanted to go
574 immediately. They said it was a "sing sing belong pig". If a man kills a bush pig, and so wishes, he prepares it and carries it to the house tamberan. The feast is announced by the gongs, and anyone may come and partake. Kis just stopped in on his way there.

648 January 22, 1937. Bob Overall came last night to try to recruit some
464 boys. Yat and Kar and Kis came around. Bob called Kar a "monki nutin". which quite upset him. He said, "You'll see whether I am or not." The next morning when Bob went down to the house tamberan and spread out his trade, there were no boys and only a handful of old men. Mundik was the only one recruited. Kar came up with a black scowl on his face and told Mar and the others not by any means to go. Someone greeted him with [829] "Good morning". He answered that this was "talk belong white man" and hence no good, and he would not have anything to do with it. Furthermore, he said that he could not get his house built because Mar and Gwiyap were working for us, and he stormed off down to Marck's house.

114 January 24, 1937. I went to Tangwishamp yesterday. Kar Gwiyap, Mar, May, Mundik and three of Bob's boys went with me to carry trade and try to buy boys. Bob had a touch of fever. When we neared Tangwishamp, the three house boys got a bit nervous, especially May and Mar. We arrived at the Tangwishamp house tamberan to find no one was there. Finally a
114 "savvy talk" appeared, and we told him we wanted some food. He brought a
123 couple of dried up yams. I told him they were no good and not anywhere
439 near enough, but paid him with a harmonica. Finally he called out that the "master belong Rumbinam" (from Rumbim) was here and wanted kai kai (food),

838 finger at him. Later I asked May if sodomy was the fashion among the Kwoma. He replied that it was the custom of the Markam (tribe from which Wisep [829] came). Then I asked him if the Hongwam understood this, and he said, "I think?" and walked away. He did not seem to be embarrassed or shocked, but did not like to talk about it.

578 Oviyap, Wisep and Marur went in to the station. May just came in with
602 his net bag, (bilum) which was empty except for a broken glass (the one which Bob had given him). He was quite upset. Fit, it seems, in revenge for yesterday's fight had emptied his bag, stolen a knife and a spoon from it, and broken the mirror, and then had left to stay with his mother who lived in Wenya (his mother was formerly married to Mar's father's younger brother). May had told Mar's mother about this, and she had railed about the incident. This is not a thing that brothers should do. She told May to wait until Fit came back and then get his net bag and do the same to it. This May plans to do.

I went to visit Wof. He and his wife were there sitting in the [123] porch section. Wof got up and greeted me very warmly and obsequiously.

123 Wof sat down and began scowling. His wife was preoccupied and did not
593 greet me as effusively as usual. Kum was standing at the side of the
595 house with his back to us, and Kaya (Wof's first wife) spoke to him sharply, scolded him for something, and I noticed that he was sobbing quietly. I asked what was the matter, and May said that his mother had gone away, and he was crying for her (May had joined in the scolding and so had Wof). Mas who was sitting there said, "Oh, don't do that."

Kum had been sitting on a log in front of the house, and now he started wandering around the porch. Wof barked at him, and he sat down quickly looking very sheepish and scared. (May told me later that he, Kum,

578 Yovalas came by and reported that last night there was some sort of fight at Sumve'Sumve. They were vague about it, but the upshot of it is that somebody burned someone else's house. Oriyap shook his head and said he thought there would be trouble.

829 Oriyap and Nas just voiced their disgust at the Yambon because they
787 defecated close to the house. Nar dreamed last night that "masta Bobbie" came and brought plenty of "lap laps," singlets, etc. and gave them to him.

Oriyap napped this afternoon and dreamed something about Nas and woke up calling to him.

533 April 19, 1937. Last night after I had gone to bed (about 9:30), the
202 Tangwishamps began beating their gongs. First there was a message on a
825 big gong, and then the rhythm was carried out on all the gongs: kuratum
789 kuratum kuratum kuratum kuratum kuratum kuratum kuratum kuratum kura kura kura. Soon afterward, this was repeated at Sombundura, and then at Afokolis. Then Kaya called out to Oriyap, who ran down to Rumbima, and Yat, Way, and Oriyap repeated the message. They were sending it to Wasamanj, a sugilawas (carved wooden figure) in the form of a crocodile, who lives in the sago swamp on the road between here and Tangwishamp. Wasamanj was responsible for sending the mosquitoes which had come up in a great swarm in the evening. There was such a swarm outside my net that their humming seemed almost deafening; everyone was restless and slapping and shouting. It is believed that the mosquitoes live in the belly of this marsalaj and that Wasamanj is responsible for sending or letting them out. The gong message was sent out in the form of a threat, and not as a prayer. The pleasure of running down and playing on the gongs, as well as the irritation against the mosquitoes, definitely entered into the stimulus for the action. Wasamanj is a sugilawas of the Wanyi people.

581 been married to a man from Tuk. She had been lazy, and he had namoed (beaten) her, and she had left him. Her father had died, and Afok was looking out for her. She stopped there for a while and then said she wanted to marry Mar and promised Afok that she would not be lazy, so he had brought her to Mar. She had been with him a long time (3 years).

123 524 Kum was playing this afternoon with May and began tapping him on the leg. I told him to hit hard. He did. May slapped him back with a newspaper, then challenged him to hit him again. I told him to (also), but he raised his hand and only brought it half way down, not striking him. He repeated this a couple of times and then began to kick him. May paid no attention, and the play stopped.

124 819 I tried to get the real ages of Kwiyokai, Awa, Gwiyap, Mar, etc. They did not know except that Awa was older than Kwiyakay; Gwiyap was older than May. May says he was the same age as Kum is now at the time of the police raid which would make him 12 or 13, and Gwiyap 14 or 15. Mar says he was the same as May when Awa was born, but I doubt it. This would make him 22; I think he is nearer 18.

Revision

Gwiyap just went down and asked Yawa. She said that Kaiuakai was older than he, that she was the same age as May who is also older than Gwiyap. This is surprising, for Gwiyap is not only larger but has a few sprouts of hair, whereas May has none. I asked them the reason for this, and they explained it was because May was afraid of scraping himself with nettles. I wonder if "Grilly" (Wof) has anything to do with it. Awa is the same age as Gwiyap, but is larger than he.

The situation at the time of the raid was this: May was 5, Gwiyap and Kamaken were 4--Mar and Fit were six. Therefore, their ages now are: Mey 14, Gwiyap 12, Mar 17, Mes is the same age as Mar.

March 27, 1937.

856 [123] Owiyap and Fit asked if I had ever cut my genitals and scraped them with nettles. When I replied in the negative they inquired how was it that I had come to grow. They were so convinced that this is essential to growth that they were very surprised that white men could grow without it.

April 3, 1937.

838 171 Sodomy is not openly practiced, however Owiyap says that it is practiced at Yambon.

#115 When I talk with him about the attractiveness of Kwiya or Awa, although at first he talked avidly, he now seems embarrassed and changes the subject.

601 595 If a man has two wives the child calls them both awa (mother) unless the other wife is a widow of an uncle. Then he calls her awa or nawalaka (younger uncle and older aunt, respectively).

593 833 Intercourse after marriage is at the wife's instigation and not the man's.

April 15, 1937.

#115 291 Last night Owiyap was sitting in the mosquito netting and took off his "lap lap." He said he liked to walk about thus--he did not like to wear it.

#115 123 #829 Talk turned to America, and he asked me alot of questions, particularly about the status of black skins in America. I told him that they had houses and money, and worked just as white people do, and tried to convey that their status there was much higher in relation to whites than it was in New Guinea. He asked me if black boys married white women. I said that they sometimes did. Owiyap said that he would like to go to America and stay there. He said, "If I go to America, I'll be all-a same masta," (just like a white man).

#115 787 He had a long dream last night. A woman had died and was on a platform. He did not know who she was except that her name was Tumakwo. Way was stabbing this woman with a rope which has the point of a spear. His daughter came up and held Owiyap by the arms and asked him to come with her into the bush, as she did not like what her father was doing.

*115 787 Way, having stuck the spear through the body of dead woman, carried her down to the water and threw her away. Then Owiyap, Way, and his whole family ran away into the bush and came to a yam house. (Owiyap's mother's name was Koumbuss, which means 'no yams'.) They sat down in this and made a fire. Way's wife inquired whose garden it was and said there must be a man about, so they left and went to their own garden in the bush. Way's two daughters got some tiny little bush bananas (ramba yofu). The mother carried a little pot-- "just like the one on your table" -- and they made soup. Then they walked through grassland. Way said they were going to a place where there were men who had taken heads. Merik, their son, began to cry and was very afraid, but they kept on until they came to a marsalai dwelling place where they became afraid and turned back. Next they came to the edge of a 'round water', where they saw a canoe which Owiyap wanted to take. Way said that it belonged to someone else who would fight them if they took it, but Owiyap said, "Never mind", and took Owanta across and then returned to get the rest. They then came to Malu. The Malus asked what they were doing their and were told they were [123] hiding from the "kiap" because they had killed the master at Waskuk. ("This dream is about you.") The Malus said it would be all right--that they would hide them. Owanta and Owiyap returned to their bush house, leaving Way and the others behind. They stayed there and Owanta killed a gouria pigeon with her hands and made soup of it which they ate. Then Owiyap went to defecate and came all the way to my house when he woke up.

*115 648 123 829 After reporting the dream, he said that he did not like the idea of the head hunting raid-- that he thought he would go to America with me. He thought this place would be 'shot up' by the police again.